

Rachel Manuel
Executive Director
Iowa Campus Compact

Testimony to the Senate Economic Development Budget Committee
Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service
House Proposed Elimination of Funding

Thank you members of the Senate Economic Development Budget Committee for the opportunity to speak to you today about the importance of the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service. I am here in my role as a volunteer Commissioner for the Iowa Commissioner on Volunteer Service and as the Executive Director of Iowa Campus Compact, an association of college and university presidents in Iowa committed to educating our future workforce with the skills and values to build stronger communities. Our association is led by our board of presidents including two-year, four-year public and private colleges and universities committed to advancing the public role of higher education. Iowa Campus Compact is a strong supporter and partner alongside the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service, which provides important resources to communities across the state to use service as a strategy to meet our communities' greatest needs.

The \$178,500 appropriation for the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service that the Iowa House of Representatives initially proposed to eliminate provides administrative matching funds for federal national service funding. **Administrative grant match is required for each state to be eligible to**

receive national service program funding such as AmeriCorps. In Iowa, this funding directly leverages \$7,650,000 in federal funding and millions more in local and private funds.

Iowa Ranks 2nd in the nation for volunteering and annually provides Iowa with \$2.28 billion dollars worth of volunteer labor. The number of Iowans volunteering has increased by more than 26% since the creation of the Commission providing more than \$576m more in services each year. These additional volunteers are leveraged through a wide variety of programs and efforts. A sample of what would be lost if the effort to eliminate the commission was successful include the following:

- Iowa would lose more than 800 AmeriCorps members serving across Iowa with efforts like Habitat for Humanity, Big Brothers Big Sisters, state parks, local schools or those responding to natural disasters. These members manage more than 40,000 additional community volunteers making a significant footprint in Iowa. If these AmeriCorps programs and member no longer exist the following sample of services would no longer happen annually:
- 1,138 Iowans effected by disaster would not be helped
- 94 houses for low income Iowans would not be built
- 6,284 Iowa homes would not be weatherized or provided energy audits or consultations
- Iowans would pay \$2 million more in annual energy bills
- 399 miles of trails (water and land) would not be established or restored

- 5,159,640 more gallons of water would be used
 - 11,940 kids would lose afterschool programming
 - 2,880 kids would lose their tutor/mentor
- Additionally 6900 students would lose service learning educational programming through their Community Based Learn and Serve grants.
- Iowa would lose the Volunteer Generation Fund Grant funding, meaning 23 Iowa Counties would no longer have a local volunteer center and communities would lose more than 48,000 community volunteers providing crucial services like the ones coordinating disaster volunteers right now in Woodbury County.
- Iowa Colleges and Students would not benefit from the \$2 million spent annually on tuition assistance through the AmeriCorps Education Award.
- The Iowa Mentoring Partnership would no longer exist and Iowa's 83 certified mentoring programs providing caring adults to ~7000 Iowa youth in need would lose their certification jeopardizing more than \$1million in grant funding that requires program certification.
- Iowa would no longer have an agency to coordinate unaffiliated disaster volunteers. In 2008, the 8 volunteer reception centers the commission established were able to leverage and document an additional \$13m in volunteer match, meaning that state and local governments didn't have to come up with cash to provide match to

FEMA public assistance funding. In fact, commission staff are deployed helping set up volunteer reception centers right now with the Missouri river flooding

- Hundreds of agencies, schools, nonprofits, churches and cities would lose direct volunteer management training and support.

In short, the work and programs administered by the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service reaches across all 99 counties in Iowa and provides services to all demographics from youth, to college students, to senior citizens, empowering Iowans to help others, while developing self-worth, putting the people of Iowa's skills to work, and developing community. Iowa has seen greater growth in volunteerism than any state in the country and it has paid huge dividends to Iowa and our communities. In April, I went on a trip to Dubuque to tour the city, alongside community leaders and stakeholders, to celebrate Dubuque's successes in community development with the assistance of national service programs such as AmeriCorps and SeniorCorps. While on the tour, we visited a well-known local community leader who summed it up nicely when said: "Service is the silver bullet to building strong communities". The \$178,500 appropriation leverages millions of dollars worth of services that would be a tremendous net loss to the state and the overall wellbeing of Iowans if not fully funded.

Thank you.